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THE

CHILDREN IN THE WOOD.

AN

INSTRUCTIVE TALE.

BY

CLARA ENGLISH.

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THE

CHILDREN IN THE WOOD.

A GOOD little boy, whoſe name was Edgar, and his ſiſter, whoſe name was Jane, were the children of a gentleman and lady who lived in Norfolk. Edgar and Jane were often told, that happineſs depended on goodneſs; and that, to be good and happy, they muſt love each other, and and never quarrel. Admired by every body for their dutiful behaviour to their father and mother, and their affection to each other, they were ſtill in their infant years, when they had the misfortune of loſing their kind parents.

Was not this a ſad thing for little Edgar and Jane? Indeed it was, and, although very young, they were exceedingly grieved

when their poor, ſick father and mother were dying. Together in the parlour, one morning, during their parents' illneſs, Jane ſaid to her brother:

JANE. Edgar, will you come and play with me?

EDGAR. Yes, ſiſter, but what ſhall we play at? we muſt not make a noiſe while papa and mama are ill.

JANE. Well, then, I will put away my dulcimer and my ball, and make Dolly a frock and a cap.

EDGAR. And here, ſiſter, is the book my aunt gave me: while you work, I will read you a ſtory.

JANE. Oh, thank you, brother; I ſhall like to hear the ſtory about the Little Girl and the Eagle.

EDGAR. Oh, Jane, you have heard that one a great many times. I will read to you about the Boy and the Robin. Shall I ſiſter?

JANE. Yes, brother, and tell me afterwards about the Girl and the Eagle.

EDGAR. Very well: now liften to

THE BOY AND THE ROBIN,

An amuſing Story.

There was once a little boy, named Charles, who was very fond of birds, and, becauſe he was good and diligent at ſchool,

his father bought him a pretty canary bird, that could ſing delightfully, and a bull-finch that could both talk and ſing ſo well, that he amuſed all the company who came to the houſe. Being great favourites, they were kept in the parlour in fine gilt cages. At dawn of day, they began to warble. This ſweet muſic always waked Charles, who was obliged to riſe early to attend ſchool. It was now no longer neceſſary to ring the bell, which ſummoned Charles to his duty; the pretty warblers let him know, that he muſt waſte no more time in bed. School was a mile diſtant, ſo, in the ſummer time, he left home at five o'clock in the morning, and in winter at ſeven. It was cold froſty weather, when Charles was trudging acroſs the fields, with his ſatchel on his back. The ground was all covered with ſnow, and the trees and the hedges were ſo white, that the birds hid themſelves in the hedges, and if they

ventured out to ſeek for food, the ſportſman's gun ſtopped their flight, and put an end to the life of theſe harmleſs, little creatures. Charles was very ſorry to ſee them killed, and ſaid, that he would never amuſe himſelf with ſuch a cruel diverſion. Well, as Charles was going acroſs the fields to ſchool, a Robin Redbreaſt flew out of the hedge, and perched upon his ſhoulder, then it hopped after him until he came to the ſtile. Charles had in his pocket ſome gingerbread, that was given him by his mother, ſo he broke it into very ſmall pieces, and fed this pretty ſociable bird. He was unwilling to leave his little companion; but, as his maſter had deſired him always to come early to ſchool, he could not ſtop to play in the field. So he made haſte to ſchool and learned his leſſon, and, when he returned home, he begged of his father to let him have a cage for the Robin; he ſaid, that he was ſure he could catch it,

it was ſo tame. But his father told him, that it would be cruel to confine it in a cage, and as it had ſought protection of him during the inclement ſeaſon, he muſt not deprive the poor thing of its liberty. The canary and bullfinch, he told him, had always been accuſtomed to confinement; for that reaſon, if he gave them plenty of ſeed and water, they would live very happily in their fine gilt cages; but the pretty Robin will not like to be a priſoner. Charles then aſked his father how he ſhould take care of the Robin who had flown to him for protection? You may bring him home, Charles, and let him fly in the great hall, but remember to feed him every day. Charles aſſured his father, that this he would never forget. With the expectation of meeting his ſociable companion, he roſe earlier than uſual the next morning, although it was a very hard froſt, and much ſnow had fallen in the night. In vain,

however, he walked very ſlowly through the field, to look for Redbreaſt. Charles returned home diſappointed. It was too cold for Robin to venture out. The following morning, Charles went again to the field. After walking up and down two or three times, and peeping very often into the hedge, out flew Robin, and perched upon his hat. Charles was very glad to ſee him again. Very gently he pulled off

his hat, and took him in his hand, then he gave him ſome crumbs of bread, which he had brought on purpoſe for him. Poor thing, it was ſo hungry, ſo hungry that it ſoon ate up all the bread, for the weather was ſo cold, that it had had nothing ſince Charles gave it the gingerbread. It lived very happily in the great hall all the winter, and Charles was delighted to hear its ſoft note, for he did not know that a Robin could ſing. In the ſpring, when the leaves were on the trees and the meadows were covered with green, Robin Redbreaſt quitted his ſheltered habitation, and winged his flight to the woods. Charles regretted the abſence of his little friendly companion; but, as he had the pleaſure of ſeeing him in the field frequently, when he went to ſchool, he hoped he might again afford him protection in the enſuing winter.

JANE. Go on, brother.

EDGAR. There is no more, Jane; I have finiſhed the ſtory.

JANE. I am ſorry that is the end. I ſhould like to know if the Robin ever came back to Charles.

EDGAR. So ſhould I. I love Robin Redbreaſt.

JANE. If Robin came here, we would give him ſome bread and ſome cake.

EDGAR. Oh, Jane, what pretty bird is that pecking at the window? I believe it is Redbreaſt.

JANE. Let us open the window, Edgar, and it will come in. Pretty creature, it ſeems very hungry.

EDGAR. I am afraid it will fly away, when we open the window.

JANE. We will open it very ſoftly: oh, it is gone, we have frightened it!

EDGAR. Well, don't let us make a noiſe, Jane; perhaps it will come back preſently.

JANE. I think I ſee it in that high tree.

EDGAR. Yes, it is coming: now it is in the buſh. If I put the cake outſide the window, I dare ſay it will return.

JANE. Here it is, brother; I am very glad.

EDGAR. Don't frighten it, ſiſter: oh, how prettily it pecks! it pecks out of my hand.

JANE. And, brother, it eats too what I give it. It has almoſt pecked up all the cake.

EDGAR. Then I will get it ſome more.

JANE. Brother, brother, it is gone.

EDGAR. Oh, dear! Pretty Robin, I wiſh it would come and ſtay with me, as it did with Charles.

JANE. It will not; it is quite gone, brother; I ſee it a great way off.

EDGAR. I am very ſorry; I hope it will come again. Now I will read another ſtory, but I can't find my book.

JANE. Why, Edgar, here it is under the table.

EDGAR. I will look for the ſtory of the Little Girl and the Eagle. Siſter, that is the one you like beſt.

JANE. That is very pretty; but the Boy and the Robin is prettier: I never heard it before. The cruel eagle, I am afraid, would kill Robin Redbreaſt.

EDGAR. Yes, ſiſter, that it would, and eat it too; but I hope Robin will hide itſelf in the trees and the hedges, that are

now full of leaves. Look out of the window for Robin while I read.

JANE. Yes, brother.

THE

LITTLE GIRL AND THE EAGLE.

Very far down in the country, lived a poor woman, who had only one little girl, named Ellen. Their dwelling was a ſmall cottage, in the middle of a field. As Ellen's mother had no money, but what ſhe worked for, ſhe employed herſelf in knitting ſtockings: theſe ſhe carried to town to ſell, and, with what ſhe received for her work, ſhe bought herſelf and her child bread and milk. This was all they had to live upon. However, the poor woman was very induſtrious, and, beſides her ſcanty portion of food, ſhe ſometimes contrived to buy a few chickens. She put them in

a baſket and returned home, and Ellen fed them every day. This was not all that Ellen did: ſhe learned to knit, and ſhe could work almoſt well enough to aſſiſt her mother.

When the chickens were grown up, the poor woman went to market and ſold them. With this money ſhe bought a pretty, little lamb. When ſhe returned home, the little lamb began friſking about the field; and Ellen, delighted with her new playfellow, amuſed herſelf in running after it. When Ellen was tired, ſhe ſat down and went to work; and the lamb, no longer inclined to jump about alone, repoſed itſelf by her ſide under a large oak tree. One hot ſummer's day, when Ellen had ſkipped round the field until ſhe was quite fatigued, ſhe reſted herſelf, as uſual, under the ſhady oak; ſhe was ſcarcely ſeated, when ſhe ſaw in the air a very large, black thing. Ellen did not know that it

was a bird, for never before had ſhe ſeen one ſo large: and, perhaps, no little girl or boy would have known that it was an eagle, which is a large bird of prey. From its ſize it is called the King of the Birds, and it devours hares, rabbits, and lambs. Its beak and talons are remarkably ſtrong. Ellen was very much frightened, as any other little girl or boy would have been, to ſee this great, voracious eagle dart upon the poor harmleſs lamb, and mount again into

the ſky with rapid flight, carrying it off with as much eaſe as a ſparrow would a fly. The poor woman was ſitting at her cottage door, when the eagle ſeized its prey, and ſhe was very ſorry, for ſhe never more expected to ſee her little lamb. Ellen, ſurpriſed and frightened, ran to her mother, and cried ſadly for the loſs of Friſkabout, as ſhe called it: but ſhe was much more grieved, when her mother told her that the eagle would carry Friſkabout to its neſt, and devour it. Ellen then aſked her mother, if the eagle's neſt could not be found, and the lamb taken away. Her mother ſaid, "that eagles did not make their neſts in trees and hedges, like little birds, but in the ſide of ſome high rock, or mountain, where it was very difficult, and ſometimes impoſſible, to get at them. "Very likely," ſhe added, "the eagle we have juſt ſeen has its neſt in Mount Huge-Top, about two miles diſtant.

Ellen, I have never taken you there, becauſe it is too ſteep for you to climb at preſent; beſides, as you are a little girl, if the eagle were hungry he would perhaps eat you up." When Ellen heard this, ſhe did not wiſh any more to go to Mount Huge-Top, though her mother had often promiſed to ſhow her the ſea and the ſhips from this high rock. Never again did the poor woman expect to ſee her pretty lamb; for the eagle was winging away as faſt it could. It purſued its courſe over ſome fields where there were haymakers. The haymakers had worked very hard all the morning, and they were reſting themſelves on a rick of hay they had juſt finiſhed ſtacking, when down came the lamb, and made them all jump. The eagle's ſharp eyes, perhaps, ſaw ſome other prey, and forgetting *that* he had already ſecured, let it fall from his talons. Friſkabout had a nice, ſoft tumble, as you may ſuppoſe,

and the eagle had not hurt him, only pulled a little wool off his back; but his journey through the air, and his fall, made him begin to baa, baa. Then the haymakers careſſed him, and as they were good, honeſt people, they enquired at all the farm houſes, who had loſt a little lamb. Every body ſaid, It is not mine, It is not mine. So the haymakers determined to carry it home, and take care of it. As they were paſſing the poor woman's cottage, Ellen was peeping out of the broken caſement, crying; ſo they ſaid to her, What do you cry for, little girl? What is your name? My name is Ellen, ſaid ſhe, and a great eagle has taken away Friſkabout, to eat him up. Then ſhe cried again ſadly, and her tears hindered her from ſeeing the lamb under the haymaker's arm. But he ſaid to her: Come, Ellen, do not cry any more, here is Friſkabout, alive and merry; give him ſome dinner now, for I dare ſay

he is hungry; and take care the eagle does not come to him again. Ellen, overjoyed, took the lamb and led it to her mother, who was much ſurpriſed to ſee it, and enquired how ſhe got it. When Ellen told her, ſhe ran after the haymakers to thank them, and to enquire how they had ſaved it. They told her, that the eagle had fortunately let it fall on the hay-ſtack, and that they had been ſeeking the owner, whom they were happy to have found.

Then the poor woman gave them two-pence for their trouble, all the money ſhe had in her pocket. When ſhe returned home, Ellen was feeding Friſkabout with a baſon of bread and milk, which was prepared for her own dinner, and the reſt of the day ſhe amuſed herſelf in the cottage with Friſkabout, for ſhe was afraid of venturing into the field.

JANE. I am very glad that Ellen had her lamb again. The eagle is a cruel bird.

EDGAR. So he is. We never ſaw an eagle, ſo we can look at the picture.

JANE. What a great creature! he is not ſo pretty as Robin.

Their attention was fixed on the picture of the eagle, when one of the ſervants, with tears in her eyes, came and told them, that their poor father and mother, who were dying, had ſent for them up ſtairs.

They did not know what dying meant, ſo they left the parlour, happy to go to their kind parents.

The children, on entering the room, ran to embrace them, and, while they were proving the affection of their innocent hearts, they burſt into tears, for they now ſaw their father and mother worſe than ever; very pale, and hardly able to ſpeak. "My dear children," ſaid the father, in a feeble voice, "I ſent for you to receive my laſt bleſſing, as it is the will of Almighty God that I ſhould ſhortly leave you. He is the only giver of all good: pray to him night and morning for his protection. This, my dear children, I have often told you; but remember now, that I can never tell it you again."

His feeble voice was almoſt exhauſted, but, pauſing, he revived again and added, "When I am in my grave, your uncle will take you home to his houſe, you muſt

then obey him as you do me, and, I hope, you will always be good and happy." He was quite tired with this exertion, for he had but a few minutes longer to live. Tenderly embracing them again and again, he bid them adieu, until they ſhould meet in another world. Scarcely had he uttered theſe words, when his weeping infants beheld him cloſe his eyes in death. This gentleman's brother, the children's uncle, had come to viſit him during his illneſs. He recommended the children to his care, telling him, that he had no other friend on earth, and, unleſs that he were good to his boy and girl, they might be greatly injured. "You muſt," ſaid he, "be father, mother, and uncle, all in one; for I know not what will become of our dear children when we are dead and gone." Their mother then begged of him to be very kind to her ſweet babes. "On you," ſaid ſhe, "dear brother, depends our children's happineſs, or

misery, in this world, and God will reward you according as you act towards them." With many tears she bid Edgar and Jane farewel; clasping them in her arms, and commending them to the protection of the Almighty, she reclined her head on the pillow, repeating "God bless you! God bless you, my dear children!" After saying this she was never heard to speak again.

The uncle had promised, his brother and sister, that he would do all they had

aſked of him; but how faithfully he kept his promiſe, will be ſeen by and by. He lived in a fine houſe, ſurrounded with a large park, a great many miles diſtant; ſo he ordered his ſervants to prepare the carriage, that he might take home theſe little orphans to his elegant manſion. In the mean time he opened his brother's will, which made him the guardian of the property left for Edgar and Jane. Edgar was to inherit three hundred pounds a year, when he was of age; and Jane's portion was five hundred pounds in gold, to be given her on the day ſhe was married; but, in caſe they died while infants, their uncle was to take poſſeſſion of the whole fortune.

All the neighbours were much grieved for the death of this gentleman and lady. The rich regretted the loſs of two worthy friends, whoſe ſociety was always pleaſing and agreeable; while the poor lamented

them, becauſe that they were deprived of kind and benevolent protectors. The little orphans were ſtill weeping, when their uncle ſent for them, and bid them cry no more. They remembered their father's dying words, which charged them to obey their uncle, ſo they wiped away their tears, though they remained very dull for a long time afterwards. The carriage was now ready to convey them to their uncle's ſeat, and with heavy hearts they left their native home.

After travelling about ten miles, they ſtopped at a little village for the coachman to refreſh his horſes. As Edgar and Jane were regretting the loſs of their good parents, they had not been cheerful on their journey, as uſual, ſo their uncle determined to ſtay here about an hour, and ſtrive to amuſe them by walking about. It was a very pretty place, and, being the reſidence of ſeveral wealthy families, was adorn-

ed with elegant houſes, and grounds beautifully laid out. On alighting from the carriage, they enquired the name of this delightful village. It was the Vale of Content. The beauty and good order of it were really remarkable; and, notwithſtanding the number of poor cottages, there was not one beggar or idle perſon. Now, how do you think this happened?—Becauſe that the rich took care to aſſiſt the poor, and ſee that their children were well em-

ployed as ſoon as they were able to work: and this was the reaſon that the inhabitants were all happy, and that they called their reſidence the Vale of Content. A few years ſince, a large, commodious workhouſe was erected for the reception of thoſe poor, whom age or illneſs rendered burdens to their families. Here were, likewiſe, received all the poor little boys and girls, who had loſt their parents; and theſe helpleſs orphans were ſupported and educated at the expence of the pariſh. Edgar and Jane were paſſing this building, while the children were amuſing themſelves. Some were playing at trap and ball, ſome at marbles, whilſt others were reading little ſtory books, which had been given them as a reward for their diligence. At the ſound of a bell, they all quitted their amuſements, and returned into the houſe to employ themſelves in reading or writing, and be inſtructed in thoſe trades by which

they were to gain their livelihood in future. They were now all aſſembled, and the ſpinning wheels and weaving machines began to move ſo briſkly, that the noiſe ſurpriſed Edgar and Jane very much, who ſtood peeping through the rails. One of the overſeers drew near the window to pull down the ſaſh, and obſerving the three ſtrangers, begged of them to walk in. Very willingly they accepted the invitation, and aſcending a few ſteps, entered a long room, on one ſide of which were placed the ſpinners, and on the other ſide the weavers. The ſpinning conſiſted of wool, which was brought here in large quantities, at the time of ſheep-ſhearing. This ſtore laſted all the winter, until the returning ſeaſon for collecting this uſeful commodity. Some were employed in picking and combing it, while others, ſtanding at wheels made on purpoſe for children, prepared it for weaving and knitting.

When ſpun it is called *Worsted*, from a town in Norfolk, famous for woollen manufactures. The art of weaving was brought into England in the year 1331, and having been much practiſed ever ſince, is now arrived at very great perfection. The loom, and the machine, by which the balls of worſted were wound into ſkeins, were conſidered very wonderful inventions by the travellers, who had never ſeen ſuch a manufactory before. The ſpinners, the

winders, and the weavers would have engaged their attention longer, had they not been aſked to viſit other rooms, where reading, writing, and knitting were going forwards. All they ſaw amuſed them very much: but, at laſt, their uncle ſummoned them to leave this little ſeat of induſtry, and to return to the carriage; for, he ſaid, he was afraid they would ſcarcely reach his houſe before the cloſe of day. With that prompt obedience which all good children ſhow, even to the wiſh of a parent, they inſtantly complied, and, accompanied by their uncle, left this well-ordered ſchool of induſtry. In repaſſing the Vale of Content, Edgar and Jane again admired the beauty, the order, and the neatneſs that reigned there. But their uncle, who had no taſte for the ſimple pleaſures which appeared to favour the happineſs of the people in this village, haſtened the children on to the carriage. The coach drove faſt,

and, about ſeven o'clock in the evening, they reached an elegant, ſpacious manſion, placed in an extenſive park, which was well ſtocked with deer. Their uncle now told them that this was his dwelling, and that it was called *Bashaw Castle.* They all alighted from the carriage; and the children being wearied with their day's excurſion, even novelty loſt, with them, all power of attraction, and they immediately begged permiſſion to go to bed; ſo they wiſhed their uncle good night, and Betty, the houſemaid, lighted them up to their chambers. Like good children, who had been well inſtructed, they immediately knelt down and ſaid their prayers, for no fatigue could make them forget this duty. But though ſo tired, inſtead of falling aſleep directly, as might have been expected, the ſtillneſs of the night, and the gloom which, to weak minds, ſeems always attendant on darkneſs, brought back to their minds the

remembrance of their loved parents, who were now, alas! loſt to them for ever. Many a tear did they ſhed at this recollection; but ſleep at length overpowered them: and, in the morning, they aroſe with the lively, happy ſpirits of youth. They now deſcended, hand in hand, walked about, and gazed at all the fine things they ſaw; they looked with aſtoniſhment at the ſpacious halls, the lofty chambers, the extenſive flower gardens, and the fine hot-houſes.

How different is all this, ſaid Edgar, from my father's ſmall houſe, his nice orchard, and pretty corn-fields?

JANE. So it is, Edgar; but I liked home better, becauſe papa and mamma were with us then, and, they were ſo good and indulgent, that we were always happy.

EDGAR. Yes, ſiſter, ſo we were. But I think my uncle muſt be very happy too, with ſo many good things around him, and ſuch a fine houſe.

Maſter Edgar little thought that his uncle, though thus ſurrounded with ſeeming plenty and luxury, was a ſtranger to all felicity; for he was very wicked, and had, therefore, no internal comfort, in which conſiſts the larger part of happineſs. He paſſed his days in idleneſs; he ſeldom read his Bible, or any good book, nor did he attend any place for divine worſhip, which might be one reaſon why he continued ſo wicked. His amuſements even were barbarous: he was very fond of cock-fighting, and ſuch inhuman diverſions. Eating and drinking, merely for the indulgence of appetite, was his great delight; and he would paſs half his days in playing at cards. Though he poſſeſſed a great deal of money, he was ſo extravagant, and ordered ſo many more things than he had money to pay for, that he felt conſtantly the diſtreſs of poverty, and was unjuſt becauſe he did not pay his debts. And here, my young

friends, I have, with ſorrow, placed before you the character of a very wicked man, and ſhown you what conduct it was that led him to the horrid crime of *intended murder*. You will, I am ſure, turn from the picture with averſion; yet, I wiſh you to dwell upon it ſufficiently, to avoid ſimilar faults yourſelves.

Edgar and Jane, though very good children, ſtill, like all other very young perſons, they required, from time to time, admonition from ſome wiſe friend. They had loſt thoſe tender parents that would have guided them to all good, and their uncle never heeded them; whether they did well or ill, he regarded it not. So Jane would ſometimes work, and ſometimes would Edgar read to her, out of the pretty little books his father had formerly given them; but very often would they throw aſide the work and the books, and run in the park all day with the deer. But theſe

poor, little children had no one to remind them it was wrong to be idle, ſo they were not ſo much to blame as thoſe who act ill notwithſtanding they receive good council.

Their uncle's eſtate, from his negligence and extravagance, was going quite to ruin. His land was no longer fruitful, as formerly, becauſe it wanted proper culture; and, in conſequence of all this, his income was conſiderably leſſened. He often meditated on ſome way in which he could get money: and, from his wicked deeds, having loſt the favour of the Almighty, and being no longer under the guidance of his grace, what wicked thought do you think was permitted to enter his head? The ſhocking one of murdering the pretty little children, of whom he was guardian, that he might poſſeſs their fortune. Now, inſtead of inſtantly repreſſing this horrid thought, he indulged it, pauſed upon it, revolved it in his mind, and, at length, de-

termined to put in execution the barbarous ſuggeſtion of this dark moment. How bad, how wicked may man become, if forſaken by an offended God! Mark this example of mortal depravity. He was at firſt idle, extravagant, and now he is ready to commit murder. He reſolves to do it, but, to conceal his cruelty, he told his wife, and all his acquaintance, that he would ſend his little nephew and niece to a relation of his in London, that they might be there educated. The children were very happy in the expectation of this journey, for their uncle ſaid they ſhould go on horſeback, and at the ſight of the horſes they rejoiced exceedingly. But this cruel man had hired two ruffians to execute the barbarous deed which he had planned. With theſe two frightful men then did little Edgar and Jane ſet out. All the way they were very merry, and their innocent prattle and gentle behaviour

began to ſoften the hearts of theſe two ruffians, named Ned and Dick, and they repented that they had engaged to murder them. Yet Dick ſaid that he would do it, as he had been paid largely by their uncle. Ned had likewiſe received as much money, but he declared that he could not do this wicked deed.

Now they had travelled all day, and it was ſun-ſet when they entered a thick wood. They left the horſes at the entrance

of the wood, and they walked ſome diſtance through ſeveral narrow, winding paths, Ned and Dick quarrelling all the way, becauſe that one would, and the other would not, murder theſe poor children. At laſt they fought, and Ned, being the ſtrongeſt, killed his adverſary. Trembling with fright, little Edgar and Jane beheld the ſhocking battle. The conteſt ended, the ruffian who had, with furious blows, murdered his companion, returned to the

children, and bade them cry no more. Taking them by the hand, two long miles he led them on. Poor babes! the ruffian now reſolved to leave them in the diſmal foreſt, to periſh with cold and hunger. They often aſked him for food: at length he ſaid he would fetch them ſome. So he left them, telling them to wait for his return; but it was not his intention to return: ſo, in vain, did little Edgar and Jane wander up and down the thick wood to look for Ned. At one time they ſat down and repeated the following verſes:

Why, O my ſoul, why thus depreſt,
And whence this anxious fear?
Let former favours fix thy truſt,
And check the riſing tear.

When darkneſs and when ſorrows roſe,
And preſs'd on every ſide,
Did not the Lord ſuſtain thy ſteps,
And was not God thy guide?

Children in the Wood.

Affliction is a ſtormy deep,
  Where wave reſounds to wave:
Tho' o'er my head the billows roll,
  I know the Lord can ſave.

Perhaps, before the morning dawns,
  He'll reinſtate my peace;
For He, who bade the tempeſt roar,
  Can bid the tempeſt ceaſe.

In the dark watches of the night,
  I'll count his mercies o'er:
I'll praiſe him for ten thouſand paſt,
  And humbly ſue for more.

Then, O my ſoul, why thus depreſt,
  And whence this anxious fear?
Let former favours fix thy truſt,
  And check the riſing tear.

Here will I reſt, and build my hopes,
  Nor murmur at his rod;
He's more than all the world to me,
  My health, my life, my God!

Ariſing from their moſſy ſeat, they walked again in ſearch of Ned, but, alas! he was not to be ſeen. In vain did they call upon him to come and bring them food: Cruel creature! he was quite gone from the poor, helpleſs babes. Hand in hand they wandered in the diſmal foreſt, picking blackberries from many a buſh to ſatisfy keen hunger, till dark night drew on, and they ſunk exhauſted on the cold ground.

They had not lain many minutes, when an old woman happened to paſs that way. She was very poor, and had been ſpinning all day to get a few hard-earned pence, and had come out in the duſk of evening to collect ſome ſticks to make her fire. She ſaw theſe children. "What mercileſs wretch," ſhe exclaimed, "has left theſe little innocents thus to periſh! Whoever it is, their wicked purpoſe ſhall be defeated, for I will take them home, I will warm them by my fire, I will feed them with my ſupper."

Ye rich, and ye affluent, who ſometimes neglect to do good, take an example from this poor woman: ſee, though ſo poor, ſhe can ſhow pity, and perform a deed of charity.

As the old woman was paſſing along with the children, Ned, the ruffian, paſſed them. He was returning into the wood to ſeek theſe babes, for though he had in-

tended to let them remain to periſh, he had not reſolution to do ſo: but when he ſaw they had found protection, he paſſed ſilently on, and the children being ſenſeleſs, no one knew him. He determined, however, to ſtay for two or three days in the neighbouring village, that he might ſee what became of theſe little orphans, which he accordingly did. Now the good woman took them to her little cot; there ſhe cheriſhed them, warmed them, fed them, and, being too poor to ſupport them wholly herſelf, ſhe got admittance for them into the School of Induſtry, which was in the village near her. This ſchool was ſupported by the bounty of all the wealthy families in the pariſh. Here little Edgar and Jane were taken good care of; they were well inſtructed, and taught to be very good and very induſtrious. They were conſidered as very poor children, and ſo really they were now. Jane learn-

ed to read, to write, to work, to knit, and to ſpin: and Edgar was taught to read, to write, and to be a gardener. One Sunday a charity ſermon was preached for the benefit of this ſchool, and here is the pretty hymn which ſome of the children ſang.

H Y M N.

To Thee, Almighty God and King,
For Thy paternal care,
To Thee, ten thouſand thanks we bring,
In homage, praiſe, and prayer:
For friends and favour we rejoice,
And ev'ry mercy giv'n,
In grateful ſounds we raiſe our voice,
To thank the God of Heav'n.

The bounteous man, who ſpreads his ſtore,
Is favour'd in Thy ſight;
Crown him with treaſure ever more,
And bleſs the widow's mite.

Our lot in life, mark'd out by Thee,
With joy will we purſue,
Oh, may we all Thy goodneſs ſee!
Each day Thy praiſe renew.

Tho' poor in honour, poor in place,
Oh, make us ſtill Thy own!
That, rich in virtue, rich in grace,
We may approach Thy throne.
We ſin in thought, in word, in deed,
Yet, hope ſhall never ceaſe,
While our Redeemer's merits plead,
For pardon and for peace.

The children at this ſchool were taught to be very, very good; and the maſters and inſtructors took ſo much care of them, that they were very happy. Little Edgar and Jane remained here quite concealed from all their former friends; and, as they were ſuppoſed to be no longer inhabitants of this world, their wicked uncle became the poſſeſſor of all their fortune: but as

ıe acquired his riches unjuſtly and cruel-
y, he could not enjoy them, for his guilty
:onſcience always tormented him. If his
riends came to viſit him, he was not
:heerful enough to amuſe them; and, at
ıight, when he retired to reſt, he was
ıfraid to cloſe his eyes, for then frightful
dreams preſented themſelves to his imagi-
ıation. In his ſleep he thought he ſaw
he ruffians ſtabbing the two infants who
ıad been left under his care, while they,

poor children, clung to him for protection which he inhumanly refuſed. Sometimes he dreamed that the wrath of God puniſhed him for his wickedneſs, by depriving him of all his wealth, his houſe, his lands and his money, ſo that he was brought to extreme indigence, and even implored his daily ſubſiſtence of the paſſing crowd; and that his children did not exiſt to ſuccour him in this wretched ſituation. At preſent this was only a dream, but ſoon, very ſoon, he ſuffered in reality what his guilty conſcience had ſo often terrified him with in ſleep; and though he now felt the diſpleaſure of Almighty God, he neither repented, nor ever prayed for forgiveneſs. He poſſeſſed a great deal of land that produced plentiful crops of corn and hay. Harveſt was now juſt over, and his barns entirely filled, for the ſeaſon was remarkably fine and hot. One night, during this ſultry weather, the ſky darkened and

dreadful ſtorm aroſe. Inceſſantly the lightning flaſhed and the thunder rolled. As he could not ſleep, he was walking about his room very much agitated, when he beheld, with terror and amazement, the fire from heaven fall on the thatched roofs of his barns, and conſume, in a few hours, the vaſt ſtore he had collected with ſo much anxiety.

Winter approached and brought a ſevere froſt, and as all his out-houſes, his corn, and his hay were burned by the lightning, his cattle were now expoſed, without food or ſhelter, to the inclemency of the ſeaſon, ſo they all periſhed in the fields. Having loſt ſo much of his fortune, he was obliged to ſend his ſons from home. A merchant, in Portugal, promiſed to employ them, and they ſet ſail with the hope of being his clerks; but the veſſel had not yet left the coaſt of England, when it ſtruck on a fatal rock, and theſe unfortu-

nate boys periſhed on the wreck amidſt the daſhing waves. When their wicked parent received the news of their death, he gave himſelf up to deſpair, and inſtead of being reſigned to the puniſhment inflicted by Heaven, and exerting himſelf, as an honeſt and prudent man would have done, to retrieve his fortune, he extravagantly ſpent the remainder of his money. His guilt, together with the misfortunes that had befallen him, as a puniſhment for his wickedneſs, prevented him from ſettling in any buſineſs, ſo continued idleneſs ſoon brought him to the extreme of poverty. He mortgaged his land, and when he had expended this ſum for his daily ſubſiſtence, he pawned his watch, and ſome of the fine cloaths he had worn when he was a rich man. Now, that he had nothing more to ſupport himſelf, he contracted ſtill larger debts, which he could never diſcharge; ſo his creditors put him in priſon, and here

he ended his days miſerably, without a friend to comfort him or relieve his diſtreſs. Thus it pleaſed almighty God that he ſhould ſuffer! Wickedneſs, even in this world, ſeldom goes unpuniſhed, though goodneſs does not always meet with its reward on earth.

The ruffian, Ned, who had left poor little Edgar and Jane in the foreſt, had generally lived by plunder. He had robbed many a traveller of his money, and purſued this courſe of life for a long time undiſcovered; but, at length, he was brought to juſtice, and condemned to die for the laſt robbery he had committed. Soon after his ſentence was pronounced, he confeſſed how wicked he had been, and that he had been hired to murder poor little Edgar and Jane. He then related the circumſtances of their journey, and that he left them alone in a foreſt to periſh; but that ſome old woman had found them,

and placed them in a pariſh ſchool. This account affected the judge, and all who ſtood round very much. The ruffian, as he went to the gallows, appeared very penitent for all the bad actions of his paſt life. He exhorted his companions, whom he was leaving in priſon, to avoid, in future, if they were acquitted, thoſe crimes for which he acknowledged that he was receiving a juſtly-merited puniſhment. After praying earneſtly to be forgiven all his ſins, he aſcended the ſcaffold, and ſoon entered on an endleſs eternity.

The wicked uncle, whom we before ſaid was impriſoned for debt, and who died in his confinement, having left no child to heir his encumbered eſtate, Edgar and Jane, whom the ruffian, Ned, had publicly, and with his dying breath, declared, were put into a pariſh ſchool, were inquired for, found, brought forth into the world, and put into poſſeſſion of *Bashaw*

Park, which ſoon changed its name for that of *Happy Dell.* Here they long lived in uninterrupted peace. The rich loved them for their goodneſs and courteouſneſs; the poor bleſſed them for their charity and kindneſs: and the poor old woman, who had formerly placed them in the School of Induſtry, they took home, and repaid the ſervice ſhe had done them, by ſhowing her unremitting kind attentions to the laſt day of her life.

Induſtry is the beſt ſecurity from vice, for thoſe who are idle always meet with bad companions: be diligent then, and you will rarely be tempted to do wrong. Honeſty is likewiſe the beſt policy: be juſt, therefore, to all, for it is virtue alone will make you beloved, eſteemed, and truly reſpected through life.

And now, my little readers, having made theſe reflections, and, I hope, impreſſed upon your minds the truth of them,

by the foregoing hiſtory, I will only detain you while I repeat a pretty hymn which was given to Edgar and Jane in the School of Induſtry. They were one day rather unhappy; they were thinking of their good father and mother whom they had loſt, and of their uncle's fine houſe, and of the pleaſant walks which they uſed to have in his park amongſt the deer, and theſe recollections made them ſhed ſome ſorrowful tears. One of the maſters obſerved their affliction, and kindly gave them this pretty hymn, which contains comfort for earthly grief, by directing our hopes to eternal joys. Now here it is:

HYMN.

Eternal Ruler! Mighty Pow'r,
Thou God of Peace in ſorrow's hour;
Whene'er the heart affliction knows,
From Thee unceaſing comfort flows.

Supremely good! then, let us pray,
The God who gives and takes away,
To make us own Him juſt and wiſe,
When earthly bleſſings He denies.

No longer then let tranſient joy,
Our thoughts and fondeſt hopes employ,
But teach our hearts Thy will divine,
That bids us earth for heav'n reſign.

And when our clay reſigns its breath,
And falls to duſt in ſilent death,
May the bleſt ſpirit ſoar above,
To praiſe the God of peace and love.

Children in the Wood.

Edgar and Jane learned this pretty hymn, and often repeated it, as I hope you will all do: and when raiſed to proſperity, greater than that which they had ever expected, they ſtill remembered that earthly joys were uncertain, and they directed their hopes and wiſhes to that world where bliſs is laſting and eternal.

A BALLAD.

THE

CHILDREN IN THE WOOD,

OR THE

Norfolk Gentleman's laſt Will and Teſtament.

Now, ponder well, you parents dear,
The words which I ſhall write,
A doleful ſtory you ſhall hear,
In time brought forth to light:
A gentleman, of good account,
In Norfolk liv'd of late,
Whoſe wealth and riches did ſurmount
Moſt men of his eſtate.

Sore ſick he was, and like to die,
No help that he could have;
His wife by him as ſick did lie,
And both poſſeſs'd one grave.
No love between theſe two was loſt,
Each was to other kind,
In love they liv'd, in love they died,
And left two babes behind.

The one, a fine and pretty boy,
Not paſſing five years old;
Th' other a girl more young than he,
And made in beauty's mould.
The father left his little ſon,
As plainly doth appear,
When he to perfect age ſhould come,
Three hundred pounds a year.

And to his little daughter Jane,
Five hundred pounds in gold,
To be paid down on marriage day,
Which might not be controll'd:
But if the children chanc'd to die,
Ere they to age ſhould come,
Their uncle ſhould poſſeſs their wealth,
For ſo the will did run.

Now, brother, ſaid the dying man,
Look to my children dear,
Be good unto my boy and girl,
No friends elſe I have here:
To God and you I do commend
My children night and day,
But little while be ſure we have
Within this world to ſtay.

Children in the Wood.

You muſt be father and mother both,
And uncle, all in one,
God knows what will become of them,
When I am dead and gone.
With that beſpoke their mother dear,
O, brother kind! quoth ſhe,
You are the man muſt bring our babes,
To wealth or miſery.

And if you keep them carefully,
Then God will you reward,
If otherwiſe you ſeem to deal,
God will your deeds regard.
With lips as cold as any ſtone,
She kiſs'd her children ſmall,
God bleſs you both, my children dear,
With that the tears did fall.

Theſe ſpeeches then their brother ſpoke,
To this ſick couple there,
The keeping of your children dear,
Sweet ſiſter do not fear:
God never proſper me, nor mine,
Nor aught elſe that I have,
If I do wrong your children dear,
When you are laid in grave.

Children in the Wood.

Their parents being dead and gone,
The children home he takes,
And brings them home unto his houſe,
And much of them he makes.
He had not kept theſe pretty babes
A twelvemonth and a day,
When for their wealth he did deviſe
To make them both away.

He bargain'd with two ruffians rude,
Which were of furious mood,
That they ſhould take theſe children young,
And ſlay them in a wood.
He told his wife, and all he had,
He did the children ſend,
To be brought up in fair London,
With one that was his friend.

Away then went theſe pretty babes,
Rejoicing at that tide,
Rejoicing with a merry mind,
They ſhould on cock-horſe ride:
They prate and prattle pleaſantly,
As they rode on the way,
To thoſe that ſhould their butchers be,
And work their lives' decay.

So that the pretty ſpeech they had,
Made murd'rers hearts relent,
And they that undertook the deed,
Full ſore they did repent.
Yet one of them more hard of heart,
Did vow to do his charge,
Becauſe the wretch that hired him,
Had paid him very large.

The other would not agree thereto,
So here they fell to ſtrife,
With one another they did fight,
About the children's life:
And he that was of mildeſt mood,
Did ſlay the other there,
Within an unfrequented wood,
While babes did quake for fear.

He took the children by the hand,
When tears ſtood in their eye,
And bade them come and go with him,
And look they did not cry:
And two long miles he led them on,
While they for food complain,
Stay here, quoth he, I'll bring you bread,
When I do come again.

Children in the Wood.

Theſe pretty babes, with hand and hand,
Went wandering up and down,
But never more they ſaw the man,
Approaching from the town.
Their pretty lips, with black berries,
Were all beſmear'd and dy'd,
And when they ſaw the darkſome night,
They ſat them down and cried.

And now the heavy wrath of God
Upon their uncle fell,
Yea, fearful fiends did haunt his houſe,
His conſcience felt a hell.
His barns were fir'd, his goods conſum'd,
His lands were barren made,
His cattle died within the field,
And nothing with him ſtaid.

And in the voyage of Portugal,
Two of his ſons did die,
And to conclude, himſelf was brought
To extreme miſery:
He pawn'd and mortgag'd all his land,
Ere ſeven years came about,
And now, at length, this wicked act
Did by this means come out.

The fellow that did take in hand,
  Theſe children for to kill,
Was for a robbery judg'd to die,
  As was God's bleſſed will:
Who did confeſs the very truth,
  The which is here expreſs'd;
Their uncle died, while he, for debt,
  In priſon long did reſt.

All you that be executors made,
  And overſeers eke,
Of children that be fatherleſs,
  And infants mild and meek;
Take you example by this thing,
  And yield to each his right,
Leſt God with ſuch like miſery,
  Your wicked minds requite.

FINIS.

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